



The Leadership Of Muhammad

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A HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION



Joel Hayward

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Bernard Street, Swansea, United Kingdom
Milpitas, California, United States



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First Published in March 2021

Typeset in Minion Pro 14/11

The Leadership of Muhammad: A Historical Reconstruction
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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80011-989-5



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Professor Hayward has given strategic advice to political and military leaders in several countries, has given policy advice to prominent sheikhs, and was tutor to His Royal Highness Prince William of Wales, Duke of Cambridge. In 2011 he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and in 2012 he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. In 2016 he was named as the "Best Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences" at the Middle East Education Leadership Awards. Professor Hayward is also active in the literary arts and has published three books of fiction and four collections of Islamic poetry.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this book are those of the author and do not reflect the views of the National Defense College or the United Arab Emirates government.



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For Hasna, my amira

الى حسنا... أميرتي

"It was through Allah's mercy that you [Muhammad] have been able to deal with them so gently. If you had been stern and hard-hearted, they would surely have dispersed from around you."

— Holy Qur'an

"A leader is a shield to the people"

"Be humble towards one another, so that no one oppresses or is condescending to another person."

The one who shows humility, God elevates in the estimation of the people."

"Advise me, O People"

— Muhammad before the Battle of Badr

"Allah's Messenger ﷺ fought [with us] in severe heat, struggling on our long journey, against the desert and the great strength of the enemy".

"O Messenger of Allah! Shall I tie [the camel's leg], or leave it loose and trust in Allah?" He said: "Tie it and put your trust in Allah."

"[It is] better for a leader to make a mistake in forgiving than to make it in punishing."



Seventh Century Arabia



Introduction

Assessing the leadership effectiveness of any historical figure is always problematical for two reasons. First, it is likely that the records of his or her actions were written by either acolytes or enemies, and are therefore imbued with bias and distortion; and second, it is hard to establish whether successes or failures can reasonably be attributed to the leader's qualities or actions, or whether myriad other factors and the actions of other people played significant roles in the way events unfolded.

Making sense of the leadership attributes of military leaders is especially difficult because of the tremendous loyalties, passions and hatreds that emerge during and after wars. The only leaders more difficult to analyse than military leaders are religious saints and prophets. Take the itinerant Jewish rabbi known as Jesus, for example. Even describing his profession and ethnicity in this mundane but factually correct fashion might inflame temper in a Christian believer who considers him not only divine, but perfect.

These epistemological challenges frame the enormity of the task of trying to say something objective, meaningful and accurate about the leadership of an individual such as the Islamic Prophet Muhammad. He was both a military leader involved in wars that created new power structures and a prophet who ushered in dramatically original ways of understanding monotheistic religion and its relationship with politics.

Scholars approaching Muhammad's life are at once confronted by the awkwardness that the very earliest extant sources that